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NEW RESTRICTIONS ON PRESS OPPOSED BY INDIAN PAPERS, NEWS AGENCIES

In an unprecedented collective protest against a government attempt to restrict press freedom, most of India's 10,000 newspapers shut down for a day early in September. They were challenging the new law adopted in Bihar that makes it a criminal offense to publish, sell or possess any printed matter whose content is "grossly indecent" or "scurrilous". While the bill only applies to Bihar and must be signed by President Zail Singh to become law, many Kndian journalists feel it is Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's first step toward nationwide press censorship. Two other states, Tamil Nadu and Orissa, enacted virtually identical laws in 1960 and 1962, respectively. Additional concern has been expressed over the component of the bill that transfers authority for enforcing the press restrictions from judicial magistrates to executive magistrates. Under the terms of the law, any journalist may be locked up without bail for writing an article offensive to local authorities.

PUBLICATIONS

VIGIL INDIA, published occasionally by the Vigil India Movement, 13 Charles Campbell Road, Cox Town, Bangalore 560 042, India. Issue No. 24 (June 1982) contains summaries of two reports commissioned by the Vigil India Movement. One concerns the clashes in Kanyakumari, and the other the harassment of tribals in Agasthyakoodam.

INDONESIA EAST TIMOR AND WEST IRIAN

COMMITTEE ON EAST TIMOR GENOCIDE

Le Comité d'Information sur le Génocide, c/o l'Association de Solidarité Avec Timor Oriental, BP 235.07 Paris CEDEX 07, France.

The Comité was recently established by an environmental group (La Voix Ecologique) to draw attention to human rights violations in East Timor. Their activities consist primarily of informing and sensitizing the public to this issue. Specifically, they have sponsored talks and distributed leaflets explaining the situation in East Timor and denouncing the sale of French arms to Indonesia. Through these and other means they are making a concerted effort to overcome the "self-censorship" of the press regarding East Timor.

MRG REPORT: EAST TIMOR AND WEST IRIAN

Minority Rights Group, 36 Craven St., London WC2N 5NG, England.

From the start of the Minority Rights Group's recently released report, author Keith Suter makes it clear that he does not necessarily support Indonesia's claim of sovereignty over East Timor and West Irian and, therefore, does not necessarily regard the people of these areas as "minorities". Nevertheless, the extent and degree of persecution suffered by these people at the hands of the Jakarta Government qualify the two cases for investigation and review by the MRG.

Guerrilla war has been waged continually on West Irian's rugged terrain since the Free Papua Movement (Organisasi Papua Mederka - OPM) was formed in 1963 in response to the Indonesian takeover. Since that time, and especially since the mid-1970s, West Irianese refugees have fled across the border to the safety of Papua New Guinea. With them have come allegations of Indonesian brutality; the reported cases number in the thousands. The use of the border regions as a haven for refugees, and as a staging area for OPM attacks, makes the conflict especially hard for Jakarta to contain or to resolve.

Yet, as Dr Suter writes, *the real problem is not one of cross-border movements or of Indonesian military operations. Instead it is Indonesia's basic policy towards West Irian. It has a racist approach towards the people, it is exploiting the natural resources for its own benefit and doing little for the people, its administration is riddled by corruption, and it is violent towards all who disagree with it. In short, its policy contains the seeds of the policy's eventual destruction--though it is presently unclear how the destruction will come about or what will replace it... But the speculation remains that perhaps the people of West Irian would be better off as part of a Melanesian federation.*

As with West Irian, East Timor's death toll continues to climb with each year of Indonesian occupation. Excerpts from Dr Suter's findings follow:

East Timor's post-1974 history is one of the greatest tragedies of this century. At least 15% (according to official Indonesian figures) of an entire population had been killed in the invasion. Meanwhile, sources outside Indonesia have put the figure as high as 50%...

Deaths are originating not only from the continued fighting but from the famine. Despite Indonesian claims to the contrary, it looks very much like the Government is seeking to starve East Timor into submission...

(Even if) the Government were to withdraw its forces today, it would have left a wound on East Timor which will take decades to heal. Its population has been decimated, most of its leaders are dead, its land ruined and its infrastructure largely destroyed. Of all Indonesia's violations of human rights, the invasion of East Timor is the worst.

The 23-page report, which includes maps and a select bibliography on the conflicts, is available from the MRG at the above address.

HUMAIKA

The Indonesian Society for Human Rights, Jl. Gatot Subroto Kav No. 5 (Depan P.N. Timah), Tilpon 58247, Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia.

The Humaika Foundation (an acronym of Himpunan Masyarakat Indonesia Untuk Kemanusiaan) was established to address the problems associated with the development process. Their three programs--Social Actions, Public Relations, and Study and Research--are oriented toward the cultivation and development of social consciousness on such issues as legal awareness, social solidarity, and community justice. Humaika also provides humanitarian aid to all who need assistance, including detainees and their families. Priority is given to those who suffer from the worst socio-economic conditions, and to those who objectively require the greatest amount of assistance.

UNICEF RELIEF PROGRAM

An agreement signed by UNICEF and the Indonesian Red Cross, signed in Jakarta last May, has enabled UNICEF to begin a joint program for children in East Timor together with the Indonesian Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The ICRC has been carrying out relief activities in the area for some time. The new program, implemented by the Indonesian Red Cross, focuses on nutrition, with particular emphasis on vulnerable groups in seven high-risk areas of East Timor. The program will be evaluated in 1983 to identify any problems of implementation and to explore future areas of assistance.

PUBLICATIONS

TAPOL, published by the British Campaign for the Defence of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia, 8a, Treport St., London SW18 2BP, U.K.
Bulletin No. 52 (July 1982):
- New Famine feared in East Timor;
- PNG is one of the few countries in the world where human rights abuse committed by the Indonesian administration in West Papua is well reported, widely acknowledged and strongly condemned;
- Indonesian troops violated the border between West Papua and Papua New Guinea, terrorising villagers, no less than four times during May this year;
- Dutch arms sales to Indonesia are increasing;
- Three West Papuans who were forcibly repatriated from Papua New Guinea last year are now reported to be in detention;
- A young Muslim tried for allegedly planning the hijack of an Indonesian plane in March last year was sentenced to death by the Bandung District Court on 13th March;
- A Muslim politcal prisoner from Wonosobo, arrested in 1979 and detained in Magelang Prison, died of an untreated illness when his requests for medical assistance were denied;
- Eyewitness accounts of torture;
- TEMPO was allowed to resume publication after having been banned for two months. PELITA, the Muslim daily, is still banned;
- Dynamika, the monthly journal of the Union of Metal and Ceramic Workers/FBSI has been banned by government officials at the request of FBSI;
- The Attorney General of the Indonesian Government has recently banned and prohibited the circulation of all books by Mr. Hamran Ambrie, a Muslim convert;
- The Student Movement: Faced with Expulsions and Arrests;
- Muslim Prisoners in Central Java have been tortured for several days.

TIMOR INFORMATIONS, published by the Association de Solidarité Avec Timor Oriental, BP 235.07, 75327 Paris CEDEX 07, France. In French.
Issue No. 21 (May-June 1982):
- Famine and deprivation in East Timor;
- EDITORIAL: Indonesia and Democracy;
- British government criticized for its silence on East Timor;
- A Committee on Genocide in East Timor formed;
- The Indonesian government has created an island of exile for prisoners taken from East Timor;
- The Church in East Timor.

E. TIMOR UPDATE, published by the East Timor Human Rights Committee, Box 363, Clinton Station, New York 13201.
Issue No. 4 (Summer 1982):
- A concurrent resolution calling for President Reagan to take effective action on East Timor has been introduced into both Houses of Congress;
- Timorese claim government covers up appalling conditions in their territory;
- "Catholic Relief Services: Whose Side are They On?"
- East Timor's Pentagon Papers.

WEST PAPUAN OBSERVER, Foundation Workgroup New Guinea, PO Box 6717, 6503 GE Nijmegen, The Netherlands.
Vol. 6, No. 6 (March-April 1982):
- List of names of disappeared political prisoners from the Jayapura region;
- Tension between PNG and Indonesia over Irian Jaya increasing;
- The Jakarta government plans increasingly large-scale Javanisation of Indonesia's only two land-border areas in Kalimantan and Irian Jaya. At the end of the present 5-year plan in 1984, the government hopes to have resettled about 400,000 families;
- Acehnese prisoners in Sumatra have been tortured by prison officials.

TIMOR NEWSLETTER, an independent monthly bulletin of news about East Timor, Rua Da Arrábida, 55-1° 1200 Lisbon, Portugal.
Vol. 1, No. 12 (July 1982):

- Portugal pushes Timor questions to international fora;
- The Pope's Visit to Portugal occasioned appeals from Timor solidarity groups;
- Round Tables on Timor held;
- Survey of the foreign press.

EAST TIMOR NEWS, bulletin of the East Timor News Agency, Box A716, Sydney South PO, NSW 2000, Australia.
Issue Nos. 74-77 (Winter 1982):

- Torture and Atrocities in East Timor: New Eye-Witness Accounts;
- Journalist Peter Hastings called "a sophisticated apologist for Suharto's genocide";
- From the Press: Tales of Torture;
- The Timor Papers: Secret Documents from the CIA, DIA, and NSA point to US complicity in Indonesia's invasion of East Timor.

Julie Southwood and Patrick Flanagan, INDONESIA: LAW, PROPAGANDA AND TERROR--ELEMENTS OF A NEW POLITICAL SYSTEM. London: Zed Press, projected for January 1983. A study of post-1965 Indonesia, focusing on the violent means used by the ruling regime to maintain and legitimate its position. It analyzes the role of the police in the post-1965 massacres and examines the Suharto regime's close association with the U.S. Government and business interests. [208 pp. £5.95; $10.50, in paper; also in hardback, from Zed Press, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DN, U.K.]

KAMPUCHEA, LAOS AND VIETNAM

S.E.A. RESCUE FOUNDATION

S E A. Rescue Foundation, Inc., 154 Arbelle St., Lewistown, MO 63452 USA; 58 Ave. du Jura Ferney-Voltaire 01210, France.

The S.E.A. Rescue Foundation was established earlier this year to assist refugees in need, particularly Indochinese refugees in distress on the South China Sea. The Foundation recently organized a project involving wooden-hulled fishing boats that were to be deployed:

> *sixteen at a time working in eight pairs on stations circling in a radius of sixty nautical miles around a large ship...This circular searching operation will create a piracy-free zone...(that will) allow the refugees to travel in safety in their own boats through international waters on their journey to the countries of first asylum in the area.*

The S.E.A. Foundation has emphasized that this $8 million project is non-military and would not entail apprehending pirates; it is meant only as a deterrent to piracy. No weapons of any kind are to be involved.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS CONCERNING INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

In the past several months many organizations have published reports on the situation of refugees from Kampuchea, Laos and Vietnam. Some of these publications focus on the issue of physical attacks against the refugees:

THE BOAT PEOPLE SOS COMMITTEE, 6970 Linda Vista Road, San Diego, CA 92111, USA. The Committee on 30 August 1982 released an appeal to open an investigation into the plight of Vietnemese detained in Thai refugee camp NW82. Citing an article by journalist Barry Wain that appeared in the 15 July 1982 Wall Street Journal, the Committee maintains that the Vietnamese held there are "treated in an extremely cruel manner" and are "beaten, raped...and denied essentials like water."

The Committee has also released a book entitled, PIRATES ON THE GULF OF SIAM: REPORT FROM THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE LIVING IN THE REFUGEE CAMP SONGKLAH, THAILAND. The 112-page book is a collection of reports describing instances of pirate atrocities against the boat people. Included are a series of petitions, letters and news reports pertaining to the problem.

THE INDOCHINA NEWSLETTER, PO Box 1163, Burlingame, CA 94010, USA. Issue No. 27 (August 1982) contains articles reprinted from various news sources describing brutal attacks by pirates, the plight of unaccompanied elderly refugees, and the deplorable situation in Thai Camp NW82.

THE UN HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) has begun an investigation into the fate of more than 300 Laotians who were forced by Thai authorities to return to their country three months ago, after fleeing persecution there. There have been indications that the refugees may have faced reprisals by the Vietnamese-backed Pathet Lao government in Vientiane.

Other reports are on the general issue of refugee resettlement:

THE COMMITTEE FOR COORDINATION OF SERVICES TO DISPLACED PERSONS IN THAILAND, 2948-B Soi Somprasong 3, Petchburi Road, Bangkok, Thailand. The Committee has published the CCSDPT HANDBOOK: REFUGEE SERVICES IN THAILAND. The handbook provides a comprehensive summary of the current state of refugee services in Thailand. Its five chapters, on "Historical Perspective," "Refugee Relief Administration," "Refugee Services," "Service Sites," and "Agency Directory" present a general view of the issues